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Consumer Expenditures for the New York-Northern New Jersey Area: 2010-2011

Consumer units (see box note) in the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa. metropolitan area spent an average of \$58,172 per year in 2010-2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Chief Regional Economist Martin Kohli noted that this figure was almost 20 percent higher than the \$48,926 average expenditure level for a typical household in the United States. While households in the New York area spent more than the U.S. average, they also allocated their dollars differently among the selected major categories, differing significantly in six of the eight. For example, the share of expenditures for healthcare, which accounted for 5.3 percent of a typical New York household budget, was significantly smaller than the national average of 6.6 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Housing in the New York area averaged \$23,154 annually and was the largest expenditure category, accounting for 39.8 percent of a New York area household's total budget, significantly greater than the national average of 34.1 percent. (See [tables 1](#) and [2](#).) Overall, 9 of the 18 published metropolitan areas had expenditure shares for housing measurably above the U.S. average. Four had shares that were significantly lower-than-average. (See [chart 2](#).) Housing expenditures among the 18 areas ranged from 32.0 percent in Cleveland to 41.5 percent in Miami. (See [table 3](#).)

The majority of housing expenditures in the New York area went toward shelter, 66.9 percent, which includes mortgage interest, property taxes, repairs, and rent, among other items; nationwide, 58.8 percent of the housing budget was allocated toward shelter. (See [table A](#).) Utilities, fuels, and public services expenses accounted for 18.5 percent of the housing budget locally; nationally, they made up 22.1 percent. The rate of homeownership in the New York area, at 57 percent, was below the U.S. average of 65 percent.

Table A. Percent distribution of housing expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., 2010-2011

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey
Total housing	100.0	100.0
Shelter	58.8	66.9
Utilities, fuels, and public services.....	22.1	18.5
Household operations	6.4	6.0
Housekeeping supplies	3.7	2.6
Household furnishings and equipment.....	8.9	6.1

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

At 13.5 percent of total expenditures, transportation was the second-largest expenditure category within the New York area; this was significantly lower than the national average of 16.3 percent. Among the 18 metropolitan areas nationwide, 6 had significantly below-average transportation shares, including New York. (See [chart 3](#).)

Of the \$7,843 spent annually for transportation by New York area consumer units, 85.6 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to a national average of 93.7 percent. The remaining 14.4 percent of New York area household expenditures was spent on public transit, which includes fares for taxis, buses, trains, and planes; this allocation was significantly above the 6.3-percent average for the nation. (See [table B](#).) The average number of vehicles per household in New York (1.3) was below than the national average (1.9).

Table B. Percent distribution of transportation expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., 2010-2011

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey
Transportation	100.0	100.0
Vehicle Purchases (net outlays)	32.9	24.1
Gasoline and motor oil	30.0	25.6
Other vehicle expenses	30.8	35.9
Public and other transportation	6.3	14.4

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The portion of a New York area consumer unit's budget spent on food, 12.7 percent, was similar to the 12.9-percent U.S. average. Among the 18 metropolitan areas, 12 had food expenditure shares that were not significantly different from the nationwide average.

Households in the New York area spent a greater percentage of their food dollars on food at home (56.5 percent) than they did for food away from home (43.5 percent). Food away from home includes restaurant meals, carry-out, board at school, and catered affairs. In comparison, the typical U.S. household spent 59.3 percent of its food budget on food at home and 40.7 percent on food away from home.

As noted, the New York area is 1 of 18 metropolitan areas nationwide for which Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data are available. Metropolitan area CE data and that for the four geographic regions of the United States are available on our Web site at www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm. Metropolitan area CE news releases are available at www.bls.gov/regions/consumerspending.htm.

Additional information

Data contained in this report are from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, which is collected on an ongoing basis by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CE data were averaged over a two-year period, 2010 and 2011. CE data are available for the nation, the 4 geographic regions of the country, and 18 metropolitan areas. The metropolitan area discussed in this release is New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., which is comprised of Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties in New York State; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties in New Jersey; Fairfield County and parts of Litchfield, Middlesex, and New Haven Counties in Connecticut; and Pike County in Pennsylvania.

The survey consists of two components, a diary of recordkeeping survey, and an interview survey. The integrated data from the BLS Diary and Interview Surveys provide a complete accounting of consumer expenditures and income, which neither survey component alone is designed to do. Due to changes in the survey sample frame, metropolitan area data in this release are not directly comparable to those prior to 1996.

A consumer unit is defined as members of a household related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legal arrangement; a single person living alone or sharing a household with others but who is financially independent; or two or more persons living together who share responsibility for at least 2 out of 3 major types of expenses – food, housing, and other expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

CE metropolitan area estimates are not comparative cost of living surveys, as neither the quantity nor the quality of goods and services has been held constant among areas. Differences may result from variations in demographic characteristics such as consumer unit size, age, preferences, income levels, etc. However, expenditure shares, of the percentage of a consumer unit’s budget spent on a particular category can be used to compare spending patterns across areas. Sample sizes for the metropolitan areas are much smaller than for the nation, so the U.S. estimates and year-to-year changes are more reliable than those for the metropolitan areas. Users should also keep in mind that prices for many goods and services have changed since the survey was conducted.

Expenditure shares for housing and transportation that are above or below that for the nation after testing for significance at the 95-percent confidence interval are also identified in charts 2 and 3 for the 18 metropolitan areas surveyed.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with our ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

For additional technical documentation and related information, see www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch16.htm.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200. Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

¹See the Additional Information section for the definition of a consumer unit. The terms consumer unit and household are used interchangeably throughout the text for convenience.

Table 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2010-2011

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey	
Average annual expenditures.....	\$48,926	\$58,172	
Percent distribution:.....	100.0	100.0	
Food	12.9	12.7	
Alcoholic beverages	0.9	0.9	
Housing	34.1	39.8	*
Apparel and services.....	3.5	4.5	
Transportation	16.3	13.5	*
Healthcare	6.6	5.3	*
Entertainment.....	5.2	4.3	*

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2010-2011 - Continued

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey	
Personal care products and services	1.2	1.2	*
Reading	0.2	0.2	*
Education	2.2	2.8	*
Tobacco products and smoking supplies.....	0.7	0.4	*
Miscellaneous.....	1.7	1.3	*
Cash contribution	3.4	2.5	*
Personal insurance and pensions	11.0	10.6	*

*Statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2. Consumer unit characteristics and average annual expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2010-2011

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey
Consumer unit characteristics:		
Income before taxes.....	\$63,685	\$77,886
Age of reference person.....	49.7	50.3
Average number in consumer unit:		
Persons	2.5	2.6
Children under 18.....	0.6	0.6
Persons 65 and over	0.3	0.3
Earners	1.3	1.3
Vehicles	1.9	1.3
Percent homeowners	65	57
Average annual expenditures.....	\$48,926	\$58,172
Food	6,294	7,371
Food at home	3,731	4,163
Cereals and bakery products	516	597
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	808	996
Dairy products	394	437
Fruits and vegetables	697	858
Other food at home	1,316	1,274
Food away from home.....	2,562	3,208
Alcoholic beverages	434	522
Housing	16,687	23,154
Shelter	9,819	15,479
Owned dwellings	6,212	9,312
Rented dwellings.....	2,965	5,360
Other lodging.....	642	807
Utilities, fuels, and public services.....	3,693	4,273
Household operations	1,074	1,384
Housekeeping supplies	613	610
Household furnishings and equipment.....	1,487	1,408
Apparel and services.....	1,720	2,596
Transportation	7,987	7,843
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	2,629	1,891
Gasoline and motor oil	2,395	2,006
Other vehicle expenses.....	2,459	2,813
Public and other transportation	504	1,133
Health care	3,235	3,089
Entertainment.....	2,547	2,512
Personal care products and services	608	679
Reading	108	113
Education	1,063	1,654
Tobacco products and smoking supplies.....	356	249
Miscellaneous.....	812	763

Table 2. Consumer unit characteristics and average annual expenditures, United States and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Conn.-Pa., Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2010-2011 - Continued

Category	United States	New York-Northern New Jersey
Cash contributions.....	1,677	1,473
Personal insurance and pensions	5,398	6,155
Life and other personal insurance.....	318	357
Pensions and Social Security.....	5,081	5,798

Table 3. Percent share of average annual expenditures for housing, transportation, and food, United States and 18 metropolitan areas, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2010-2011

Area	Housing	Transportation	Food
United States.....	34.1	16.3	12.9
Atlanta	37.1 *	16.1	11.7 *
Baltimore	37.4 *	11.9	12.5
Boston	32.5 *	14.1	12.5
Cleveland	32.0 *	17.1	12.4
Chicago	35.6 *	14.5	12.4
Dallas	33.4	17.1	12.8
Detroit.....	32.2 *	17.4	12.5
Houston.....	33.5	16.7	12.5
Los Angeles.....	37.6 *	16.2	13.2
Miami.....	41.5 *	15.7	12.9
Minneapolis	32.3 *	16.2	12.4
New York	39.8 *	13.5	12.7
Philadelphia.....	38.9 *	14.4	11.8 *
Phoenix	33.5	16.9	13.0
San Diego.....	40.8 *	14.9	11.1 *
San Francisco	37.7 *	13.1	11.5 *
Seattle	34.9	15.4	11.3 *
Washington.....	35.3	15.0	11.5 *

*Statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.

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